

DEMOCRACY,
HUMAN RIGHTS
AND GOVERNANCE
AND BIODIVERSITY
CONSERVATION
LINKAGES



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



BANDA ACEH, ACEH PROVINCE, INDONESIA: Fishermen gather around their daily catch. Improved capacity to reduce illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing will help save marine ecosystems. Photo by USAID

Integration of democracy, human rights and governance and biodiversity conservation can lead to improved outcomes in both sectors.

DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND GOVERNANCE



Citizen Engagement



Institutional Strengthening



Political Economy Analysis (PEA)



Women's Empowerment

AND BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION LINKAGES



Biodiversity



Community Forest Management



Fisheries Governance and Management



Natural Resources



Environmental Crime



Land and Marine Tenure



Wildlife Management

COVER PHOTO TOP. KENYA: Parakuo, mother of 11 children, is one of the community's new elders (Kenya Justice Project). Photo by Deborah Espinosa.

COVER PHOTO BOTTOM. PAPUA NEW GUINEA: Through the help of USAID, fishermen are working towards passing a law that recognizes community-based marine protected areas. Photo by Tory Read.

Introduction

Governance describes the process by which decisions are made and carried out; it can refer to corporate, international, national or local bodies, or interactions between sectors of society. Governance comprises such critical development elements as the rule of law, public-sector accountability, communication with citizens, anticorruption measures and the ability to deliver goods and services.

There are strong linkages between good governance and biodiversity conservation. Better governance, conservation and natural resource management all focus on improving the collective good. Similarly, good governance and biodiversity conservation require the participation of local communities in decision making and management. Where governance institutions are seen as legitimate, transparent and effective, people are much more likely to follow the rules and regulations that the institutions set. Further, combining collective action, natural resource management and good governance can provide incentives to individuals and groups to manage natural resources in more sustainable ways. Good governance is thus a linchpin of biodiversity conservation.

USAID democracy, human rights and governance (DRG) staff place primary importance on democratic values and citizen centered governance. But many living in historically authoritarian countries face limited freedoms and therefore a restricted space for independent civil society. At the same time, those dependent on natural resources in these countries, living in poverty and food insecurity, are gripped by their situation and the concern for democracy can seem secondary at best. In this context, USAID seeks to motivate and support democratization that is in many ways entwined with improving livelihoods.

Natural resource management and conservation are good entry points for strengthening governance and civil society because they focus on issues and concerns central to the livelihoods and wellbeing of a large part of the population in many countries where we work. Today, at least 1.6 billion people worldwide rely on forests for some part of their livelihood, and about 2.6 billion people in developing countries depend on fish for protein and/or income. The poor management of both forests and fisheries means that these resources will not meet human demand over the long term—compromising global food security and straining the resilience of these systems

and society. Unbridled exploitation is also leading to unprecedented rates of species extinction. These trends threaten the ability of families to lift themselves out of extreme poverty and communities to protect against economic or environmental shocks. Natural resource management also offers the opportunity to bring together multiple stakeholders to foster open and accountable participation and help avoid potential violent conflict. Clearer policies and bylaws governing natural resources can reduce overexploitation by clarifying management, ownership, use and benefits.

Power has numerous dimensions and operates at all levels, from the household to the global scale. Social sustainability and improved governance involve understanding power, resulting inequalities, and crafting explicit strategies to enable stakeholders with different levels of power to communicate and work together in a way that does not harm the less powerful. At the local scale, inequalities among stakeholders contribute to elite capture, conflict and lack of collective action. Political economy analysis (PEA) (described below) can be a useful tool to gain greater insight into power dynamics that affect natural resource management at the regional, country and community levels.

Conservation and natural resource management initiatives benefit greatly from partnership with DRG programs and partners to reinforce the importance of good governance, transparency and the rule of law to society as a whole and to conservation and natural resource management specifically. Key DRG concepts such as the rule of law, civil society strengthening, judicial strengthening, accountability, transparency and human rights can be applied in the context of biodiversity. Many biodiversity conservation projects support actions that increase authority of, or devolution of management to, local communities and institutions. This can decrease dependence on higher order institutions and expand options for community self-sufficiency.

Integrated Approaches

There are a number of frameworks, tools and approaches that support and promote sound natural resources management and good governance. These include the Nature, Wealth and Power (NWP) framework, decentralization, co-management, property rights and resource tenure, combating environmental crime, PEA and capacity building and organizational strengthening.

The **NWP framework** posits that conservation outcomes (nature) are influenced by how biodiversity and natural resources are used to generate and sustain livelihoods and economic growth (wealth) and by governance of land and resources (power). This framework recognizes the role of rights, institutions and policies in resources for development and the influence of power and decision-making in determining who benefits from resource management. The NWP framework recommends strengthening inclusive land and natural resource tenure systems, decentralizing powers and responsibilities to accountable, representative authorities, improving representation of diverse stakeholders in the process of resource decentralization, and strengthening public and private institutions for service delivery.

Decentralization, or the transfer of power and authority to representative local actors and institutions, is one approach through which governments devolve control over natural resource management. In the natural resource sector, **co-management** describes situations in which governments share rights and responsibilities with resource users. Common property resources are resources that are owned and managed by communities, societies or nations. Well-written natural resource policies can help to clarify ownership, management, use and benefits, minimizing overexploitation of natural resources.

Additional power dynamics related to natural resource management include **property rights and resource tenure** regimes, such as the right to manage and benefit from land, fish, trees, wildlife and water. Land or marine tenure is the institutional structure that determines how individuals and groups secure access to lands, oceans or resources. Tenure rules define the ways in which property rights to land and natural resources are allocated, transferred, used or managed and can be held by individuals, communities, governments or other

groups. When individuals and communities have secure rights to land and resources, incentives shift in positive directions. Rather than poach or overuse, people with secure land and resource rights have incentives to conserve resources; people are better able to capture future investment returns.

Efforts to address land and marine tenure issues also offer an avenue to contribute to strengthened governance and accountable, inclusive and responsive institutions through addressing issues that underlie or trigger conflict or violence. Stronger land and marine tenure can contribute to a range of development outcomes, including promoting democratic governance and resilience, mitigating conflict, improving natural resource management, eliminating extreme poverty, enhancing food security, improving climate change mitigation and adaptation and empowering women.

Environmental crime and wildlife trafficking can undermine security, rule of law and efforts to end extreme poverty and achieve sustainable development. USAID works to combat environmental crime and wildlife trafficking by improving investigation and prosecution of environmental crimes, strengthening justice systems, strengthening inter-jurisdictional partnerships to improve reporting and prosecution of environmental crimes, enhancing capacity to reduce poaching, and improving knowledge and raising awareness on the value of biodiversity and the impact of environmental crimes.

Political Economy Analysis (PEA) is an analytical approach to help understand the underlying reasons why things work the way they do and to identify the incentives and constraints affecting the behavior of actors in a system. By helping to identify these influences—political, economic, social and cultural—PEA supports a more politically informed approach to working, known as Thinking and Working Politically. Through Thinking and Working

Politically, USAID seeks to better understand the systems where we work, and to identify sustainable, locally-generated solutions. USAID's [PEA framework](#) has been applied to understand governance and biodiversity conservation in a number of countries.

Participation of civil society can help to build and sustain democratic societies. Civil society organizations

can provide channels for citizens' voices, help citizens hold government accountable and lobby for reforms to improve democratic governance. USAID programming supports **capacity building and organizational strengthening** to enhance the capacity of civil society organizations to carry out these functions and to train citizens to better engage in democracy and governance initiatives.

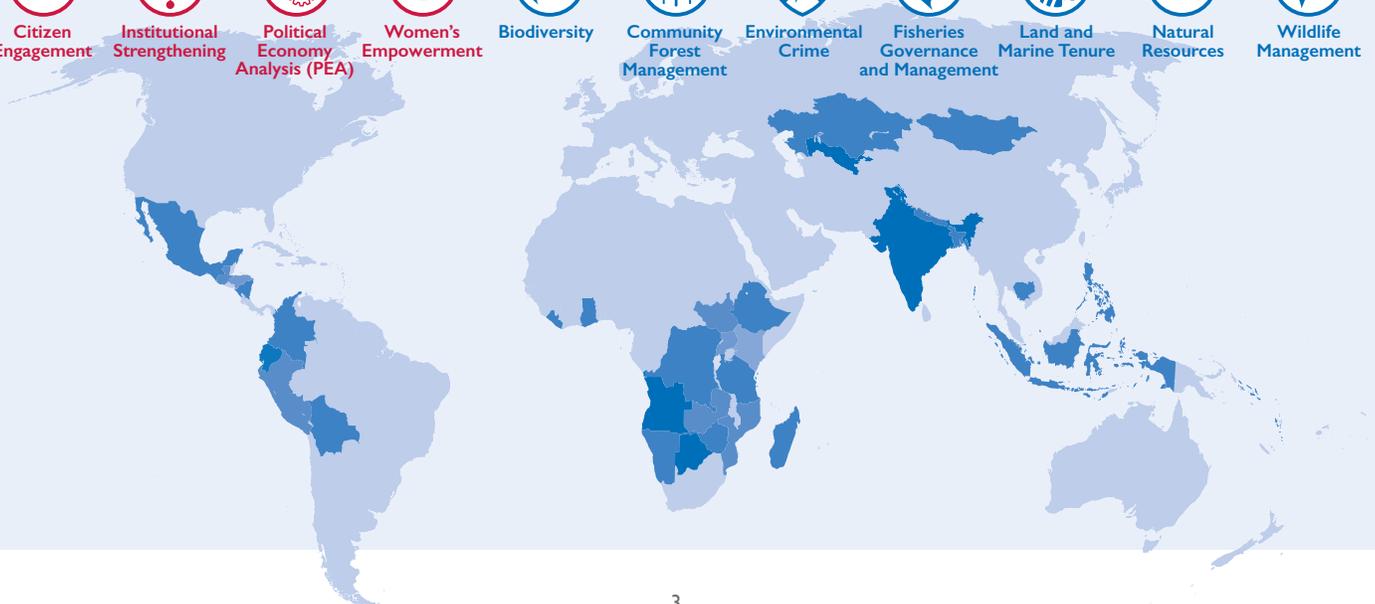


PHILIPPINES: Photo by USAID/Philippines

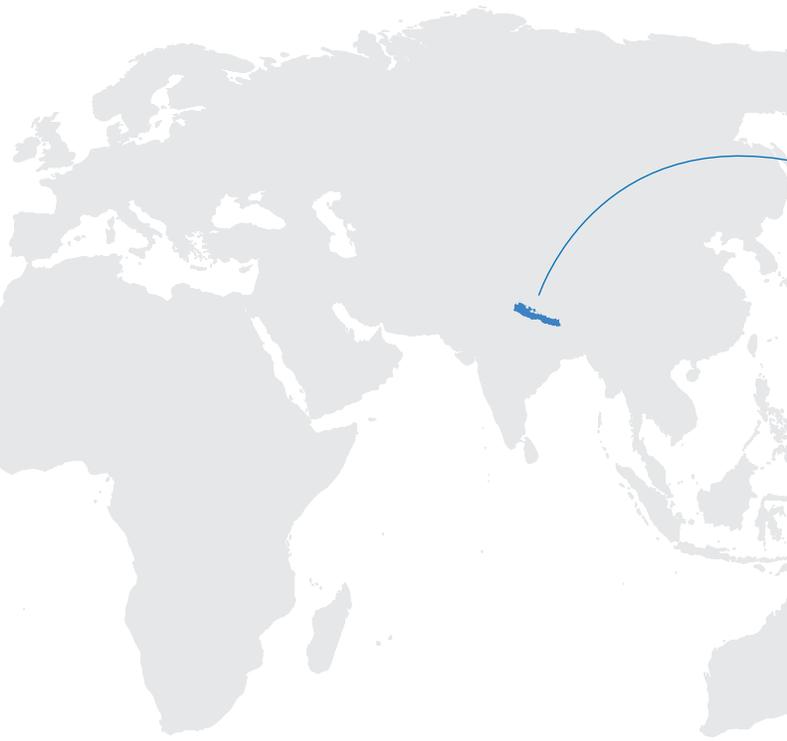
This document provides examples of how and where USAID has advanced DRG objectives such as participation, inclusion, transparency and accountability through promoting co-management approaches, tackling environmental crime and wildlife trafficking, strengthening the legal and judicial sectors, strengthening land and marine tenure systems, employing PEA and enhancing the capacity of civil society to hold governments accountable. These examples illustrate how biodiversity conservation and DRG integration can help create the conditions needed for stable and sustainable development.

USAID PROJECT EXAMPLES

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USAID PROJECT EXAMPLES



In **Nepal**, the Hariyo Ban program built on the country's strong history of decentralization and co-management approaches to further enhance the capacity of and improve internal governance of community forest user groups. By practicing good governance and accountability, community forest user groups exemplify good governance and democratic practices and help hold government agencies accountable. In Nepal's 2017 elections, 776 community forest user groups members were elected to government positions, 32 percent of whom were women.

Hariyo Ban promoted equitable benefit sharing and participation in forest management by women and the poor, marginalized and vulnerable groups. The most marginalized groups reported being the most satisfied with benefit sharing and governance.

Improved forest management through the Hariyo Ban project contributed to positive perceptions of forest conditions. A project assessment found that more than two-thirds of respondents perceived their forest condition as improving, and The Nepal National Forest Inventory confirmed a four percent increase in forest area. Many respondents reported increased wildlife and almost one-third of participants said water has improved or increased.



KANCHANPUR DISTRICT, NEPAL – 2012: The Hariyo Ban Program started a Community Learning and Action Centre. Photo by Umesh Shrestha, Hariyo Ban Program, CARE Nepal.

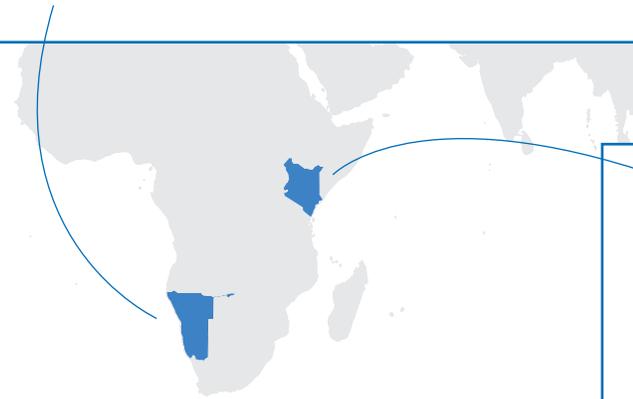
Other USAID projects that have contributed to community forest management and DRG outcomes, include the **People, Rules and Organizations Supporting the Protection of Ecosystem Resources** project in Liberia, the **Forest Incomes for Environmental Sustainability** project in Liberia and the **Mexico Competitiveness Program**.



In **Namibia**, the **Living in a Finite Environment (LIFE)** program employed community-based approaches to wildlife management and supported institutions and systems that enable rule of law. The LIFE program's positive governance and biodiversity outcomes positioned LIFE to contribute to legislation that devolved rights over wildlife and tourism to local communities and gave them the right to form a management body. Over its 15-year history, the LIFE program underscored the importance of an appropriate policy and institutional framework and illustrated that empowering legislation is critical to ensuring secure natural resource benefits and sustainable management. The conservancy process promoted inclusive

participation and empowered women to influence decision-making. Women comprise over 50 percent of conservancy members and 37 percent of conservancy committee members, including three female committee chairs.

The project registered 52 community-based conservancies that sustainably manage more than 12.23 million hectares of land resources—14.7 percent of Namibia's surface area. These conservancies have contributed to recovery of wildlife populations across the country and improved natural resource bases. Nyae Nyae Conservancy, for example, increased its game population six-fold between 1995 and 2008.



In **Kenya**, the **Northern Rangelands Trust** used a community conservancy approach to help communities reinvigorate traditional management systems, rehabilitate degraded areas and improve regional peace and security. The program created and supported ranger units that helped rangers to address crime and threats against wildlife populations and to expand law enforcement in the conservancy areas. The Northern Rangelands Trust documented a 46 percent reduction in elephant poaching in fiscal year 2015 compared to poaching levels in the same area between 2012 to 2013.

Northern Rangelands Trust's anti-poaching activities increased resiliency and reinforced security gains, resulting in huge tracts of previously lawless land that are now under control, with citizens feeling safe to travel freely and wildlife returning to the area. In turn, these results have contributed to increased community commitment to conservation-driven development and participatory management of over 2 million hectares of rangeland.

KENYA: Nasuulu Conservancy rangers use the GPS technology to track poaching cases. Photo by USAID Kenya.



Other USAID projects that have contributed to community land and wildlife management and DRG outcomes include the **Greater Madidi-Tambopata Landscape** project in Bolivia, the **Sustainable Conservation Approaches in Priority Ecosystems (SCAPES)** project in 19 countries and the **Tibet Plateau Development Program**.



In the **Philippines**, the **Ecosystems Improved for Sustainable Fisheries (ECOFISH)** program promoted a decentralized approach to coastal and marine resources management through an ecosystem approach to fisheries management. The program built the capacity of local government units to apply an ecosystem approach to fisheries management and increased stakeholder participation in an ecosystem approach to fisheries management, leading to improved management of more than 1.8 million hectares of municipal marine waters in the project's eight marine key biodiversity areas. The program supported the adoption and implementation of an ecosystem approach to fisheries management plans to reduce fishing pressure and improve enforcement of coastal laws and fisheries management policies. These efforts resulted in a 24 percent increase in fisheries biomass across the eight marine key biodiversity areas and a 12 percent increase in employment or better employment over its five-year implementation period. Other program achievements include increased institutional capacities for fisheries management, such as fisherfolk registration and fishery law enforcement.

Other USAID projects that have contributed to national and community fisheries management and governance include the U.S. Support to the **Coral Triangle Initiative** in the Asia-Pacific region; the **Global Fish Alliance** in Honduras, Mozambique, Cambodia and Nicaragua; the **Ghana Sustainable Fisheries Management Project**; the **Collaborative Management for a Sustainable Fisheries Future** in Senegal; the **Indonesia Marine and Climate Support Project**; and the **Integrated Protected Areas Co-Management project** in Bangladesh.



The Maya Biosphere Reserve in **Guatemala** is the largest block of wildlands in Mesoamerica and contains the region's most biologically diverse ecosystems. The reserve is threatened by illegal logging, hunting of protected species and other crimes, such as narco-trafficking. A 2015 evaluation found that Maya Biosphere Reserve park rangers lacked basic information on how to address crimes committed in the reserve. To enhance rangers' capacity to fight environmental crime, the **Security and Justice Sector Reform Project** provided technical and financial support for a diploma course on protection and legal defense of natural and cultural patrimony in the Maya Biosphere Reserve. From 2015 to 2017, the Security and Justice Sector Reform Project trained 500 park rangers on environmental crime topics, including environmental and cultural legislation, the role of rangers in the criminal process, how to report crimes and file complaints, and crime scene

management in protected areas. Since the course began, there has been a significant decrease in dismissals of environmental crime complaints as a result of misinformation or lack of information in the field complaints. In 2014 and 2015, 126 and 216 crimes, respectively, were dismissed, compared to 89 cases dismissed in 2016. This training is expected to be replicated at the national level to strengthen capacities and knowledge of environmental protection teams to support Guatemala's biodiversity.

In addition, the program strengthened local justice operators' capacity to address environmental crime and contributed to the creation of a specialized judicial system and environmental courts. As a result, the number of environmental crime sentences has tripled to 55 sentences in 2016, the largest number of decisions on environmental crime over the past eight years.

Other USAID projects that have addressed environmental crime include **Project Predator** in 19 Asian countries and the **LESTARI** project in Indonesia.



The **Boma-Jonglei Landscape** of **Southern Sudan** program recognized that competition over access to and use of land and natural resources contributes to conflicts in the landscape and therefore focused on land use and security. The program supported the development of national level policy and legal frameworks, strategies and guidelines and strengthened the capacity of park authorities and local communities to manage parks, monitor wildlife crimes and manage conflicts. The Boma-Jonglei Landscape program provides a learning experience for other programs operating in post-conflict situations characterized by weak government capacity for law enforcement regulation and policy implementation.



The **Enhancing Customary Justice Systems in the Mau Forest**

The **Enhancing Customary Justice Systems in the Mau Forest** project in **Kenya** built the capacity of the customary justice system to support and enforce women's land rights, particularly among traditional elders. The project's legal literacy training and "community conversations" on women's formal land rights increased women's access to land and enhanced their control over household decision-making around land and other family assets. In a katiba (constitution), elders committed to ensuring gender equity in all community-level committees, including community forestry associations and water resource users' associations. During the project period, 14 female elders were elected, representing the first time women have been elected as elders within the Maasai and Kalenjin communities.

Other USAID projects that have addressed land tenure and DRG outcomes include the **Ethiopia Land Tenure and Administration Program** and the **Ethiopia Land Administration Strengthening Program**.

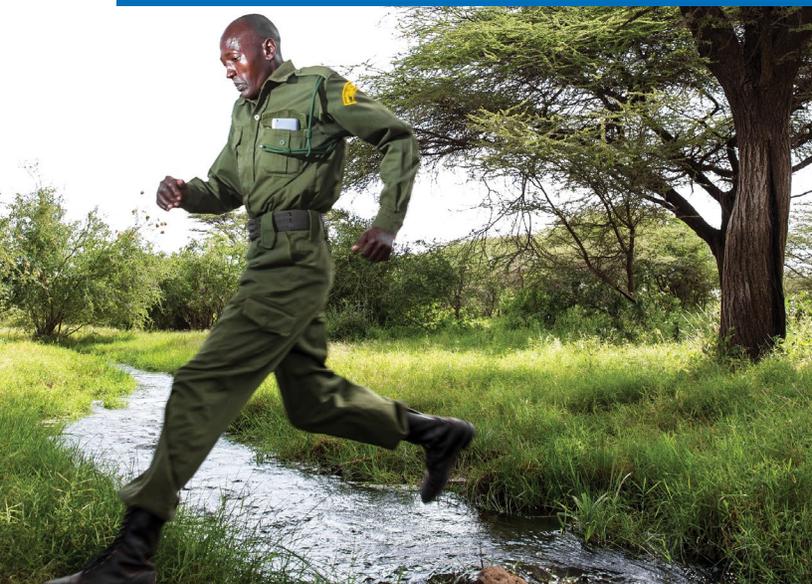


BOMA-JONGLEI LANDSCAPE, SOUTH SUDAN: Elephant herd. Photo by WCS.



The **Kenya Civil Society Strengthening Project** empowered civil society organizations to enhance natural resources management as a mechanism for promoting biodiversity and reconciliation and reintegration, contributing to controlling conflict and support for governance, justice and democracy. Kenya Civil Society Strengthening Project subgrantees effectively advocated for reforming the National Land Policy, with a focus on increasing inclusion and rights of those marginalized in the previous land policy. Kenya Civil Society Strengthening Project similarly supported civil society organizations to review and implement the Wildlife Bill and to contribute to a legislative framework review for the forestry sector. This effort resulted in more than 427,112 hectares of land under improved natural resources management and 42,542 hectares in areas of biological significance under improved management and showing improved biophysical conditions, as of the project's mid-term evaluation.

Another USAID project that has increased citizen engagement in governance and natural resource management is the **Citizens Engaging in Government Oversight in Natural Resources Management** project in Tanzania.



A **rapid field-level PEA in Madagascar** recommended that USAID focus on monitoring and supporting the internal dynamics of locally managed marine area networks to enhance their effectiveness in local resource governance and management as well as to address overfishing and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. The PEA further identified the role of small-scale fisheries in food security and nutrition and recommended strengthening community-based management and improving fisheries management to benefit the marine environment and human health.

Other USAID PEAs that have addressed biodiversity and governance include biodiversity and extractives PEAs in Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

KENYA: A ranger jumps over a stream flowing from Chaffa Springs in Nakuprat Gotu Community Conservancy. Photo by USAID.



KORMARGEFIE KEBELA, ETHIOPIA: A woman shows her first level land use certificate. Kormargefie kebel (village) was part of the piloting of the survey instrument for USAID's Ethiopia Land Tenure and Administration Program and the Ethiopia Land Administration Strengthening Program Impact Evaluations. Photo by Jessica Nabongo/Cloudburst Consulting Group.

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CONTRACT INFORMATION

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